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UCONN WINNERS
Men beat Tulane for 3rd straight; women overwhelm Houston. E1

PATRIOTS MOVE ON
New England beats the Titans 35-14; next up, the Steelers or Jaguars. E1

CLEAR, COLD 5/6
Weather calms for a couple of days. A2

Hartford Courant

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ENFIELD ESCAPE

How A Prison Break Went Down

Hanging Beneath A Truck, Inmate Avoids Sunday Security At Two Gates

By **DAVE ALTIMARI**
and **NICHOLAS RONDINONE**
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Even though Jerry Mercado, halfway through a three-year burglary sentence, was able to climb a fence and latch onto the underbelly of a maintenance truck, his odds of escaping from the Carl

Robinson Correctional Institution in Enfield should have been — at best — slim to none.
Like all Connecticut prisons, the medium-security, dormitory-style Carl Robinson has a plan in place for guards to search each vehicle that comes and goes. But Mercado had something in his favor: It was a Sunday, and the guard

station at the gates through which the truck would soon leave was unmanned, multiple sources have told The Courant.
On Sundays, the plan is for state employees like the truck driver, who arrived at the prison to perform maintenance work, to contact a supervisor, who will then alert guards to inspect vehicles before they leave. The guard

station isn't manned on weekends because there are too few vehicles to search.
But on this Sunday, Jan. 7, the plan fell apart.
The driver called the supervisor, sources said. The truck, with Mercado



PRISON , A9 **Mercado**

HARTFORD CONSOLIDATION PLAN



FIRST-GRADER Alianna Drayton holds a sign in defense of her school, Batchelder Elementary, during a Hartford Board of Education hearing on proposals to consolidate schools in the city. Batchelder is scheduled to close in June.

AFRAID FOR THEIR SCHOOL

Officials Hear Parents Refrain: 'Don't Close Ours'

By **KATHLEEN MEGAN**
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For Hartford Superintendent Leslie Torres-Rodriguez, her school consolidation plan is all about doing what's best overall for the city's ailing school system, but for parents it often comes down to one school — their child's.
So when Torres-Rodriguez took her proposal for consolidating city schools on the road last week, which she has said will save money and improve the quality of education, she heard no praise from the parents and students whose schools have been targeted for closure, relocation or re-use.
"Please don't close our school. It's

SCHOOLS , A8



SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT Leslie Torres-Rodriguez says she hears the pain parents express over her school consolidation plan, but adds, "It is my job to look at the larger picture."

38 MINUTES OF FEAR

'Missile Inbound' Scare

Alert Panics Hawaiians Nervous About N. Korea

By **AMY B WANG, BRITTANY LYTE**
and **GREG MILLER**
Washington Post

For 38 harrowing minutes, residents and tourists in Hawaii were left to believe that missiles were streaming across the sky toward the Pacific island chain after an erroneous alert Saturday morning by the state's emergency management agency.
"BALLISTIC MISSILE THREAT INBOUND TO HAWAII," warned an 8:07 a.m. message transmitted across the state's cellphone networks. "SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER. THIS IS NOT A DRILL."
Only after an inexplicable delay by the state agency — during which residents scrambled to seek shelter and contact relatives — was a subsequent message sent describing the missile warning as a "false alarm."
For many Hawaiians, it was a terrifying period in a

MISSILE , A7

RACE FOR GOVERNOR

Finance Reports Offer Clues On Candidates

Fundraising May Separate Some From The Crowd

By **RUSSELL BLAIR**
and **MATTHEW KAUFFMAN**
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Susan Bysiewicz is serious about running for governor, Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin's fundraising machine is in overdrive and there are still millionaires willing to dump fortunes into a run for the top job in Connecticut.
Those are just a few of the details that emerge from an examination of the latest round of campaign finance reports of candidates for governor by The Courant. The new reports account for fundraising and spending during the last three months of 2017.
With no public polling to date in Connecticut's hotly contested gubernatorial election, political

FINANCE , A9

Run Free Hartford

A dedicated group of people gather weekly on the city's waterfront, no matter how cold, in the name of fitness and fun. Anybody can show up. There are no requirements.
SundayCT, Page B1

Lisa Chedekel, Former Courant Reporter, Dies

Lisa Chedekel, an award-winning and "fearless" reporter who worked at The Courant for years, died Friday. She was 57. **SundayCT, Page B4**

A Wish Fulfilled

A woman battling cancer told The Courant of her wish to "look pretty again." The owner of an Avon wig salon stepped in. **Insight, Page C3**



The Music Maker

Gabe Herman balances two careers: professor at the Hart School and mentor to the musicians on the local music scene. **Arts, Page G1**

Folksy Voice Silenced

Sports broadcaster Keith Jackson dies at age 89. **Sports, Page E10**

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CLASSIFIED**D7-8** MOVIES.....**G5** PUBLIC NOTICES.....**D7** **Hartford Courant**
LOTTERY**A2** OBITUARIES**B6-B10** PUZZLES**D8, F7** media group

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